

# EXTENSIONS OF REMARKS

## OBSERVING THE HISTORIC PALESTINIAN ELECTIONS

HON. NICK J. RAHALL II

OF WEST VIRGINIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, January 24, 1996

Mr. RAHALL. Mr. Speaker, the Arab-American Institute [AAI] January 23, 1996 delegation, which I had the high honor to chair, traveled to Palestine to witness the first ever, historymaking free national elections in that country.

I was accompanied by Dr. James Zogby, president of AAI, and by former Members of Congress Mary Rose Oakar (D-OH), Toby Moffett (D-CT), and by Ruth Joseph, mayor and State representative of Waterville, ME, Thomas Lazieh, former mayor Central Falls, RI, Teresa Isaac, vice mayor, Lexington, KY.

Also present during the observation were Kenneth Handel, partner at Arnold and Porter law firm of New York with previous international electoral experience, and Dr. Najat Arafat Khelil, co-coordinator of the Palestinian Jewish Women's Dialogue Group.

The delegation was coordinated by Zogby and Washington businessman Hani Masri with assistance from Hady Amr, a political consultant with electoral monitoring experience in South Africa. My special thanks and that of the delegation goes to Jim Zogby for making it possible, and to Hani Masri for all of his unstinting support that helped lead to this historic occasion and who shared his electoral monitoring skills with us during this important observance.

Thanks goes also to Mr. Said Hamad, deputy director of the PLO office in Washington who did an excellent job of coordinating events on the ground in Palestine and smoothing our way there.

We witnessed a professional, politically progressive, patriotic, and proud Palestine people parade to the polls for their historic first national elections.

An excitement and enthusiasm permeated the air and ran in the veins of a people tasting and thirsting for freedom.

Nothing can detract from the success of a people determined to regain control of their destiny—over their dreams and aspirations for their children.

We witnessed Palestinians traveling to the polls via cars, trucks, buses, tractors, donkeys, horses, carts, hobbling on canes, and once arriving having to wait hours in long lines due to huge voter turnouts. But to many who have waited a lifetime to vote freely—a couple more hours' wait was very little.

The International Community of Observers and former President Carter were encouraged and impressed and gave the Palestinians very high marks.

The bottom line—these elections were free; these elections were fair. They were conducted in a highly professional manner.

The President-elect, Yasir Arafat and his elected leadership team, many of whom were

elected not as Arafat candidates but as independents, deserve our praise and congratulations. Tremendous duties have been bestowed by the people and they now embark upon a new journey as the freely elected representatives of Palestine.

Our presence demonstrated clearly to the Palestinians that America and the world are strongly with them in their quest for democratic development and in their quest to quash disruption by extremists from all sides.

The Israeli Government and Prime Minister Peres deserve commendation for their support as well as of this electoral process and, with a few exceptions, allowed Palestinians to conduct themselves freely.

From revolutionary to Ra'ees—Arabic for President—many in our delegation, like Representative Mary Rose Oakar and Toby Moffett, and Jim Zogby, have personally stood by President Arafat for a portion of his long, long, long journey to this point in history.

From the bowels of Beirut in 1980 and 1982 to the palace of the President in Gaza last Friday, where the lights flickered from lack of sufficient power, we have conversed with, we have pleaded with, we have sought dialog, we have agonized with and we now celebrate a new-era President Arafat and the Palestinian people. He fully recognizes that with new legitimacy from the people comes new responsibilities.

Israel Prime Minister Peres will now allow all PNC members to meet in Palestine so as to conduct the people's business and properly amend the PNC charters per the Oslo accords.

As both men enter final status negotiations this coming May 4, may they enter with a greater strength within themselves and greater faith in each other, and a greater resolve to enhance and spread his peace of the brave among their people and among all mankind—two states, two peoples living side by side in peace—Israel and Palestine forever.

## STATE OF THE UNION

HON. BRIAN P. BILBRAY

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, January 24, 1996

Mr. BILBRAY. Mr. Speaker, last night President Clinton delivered a good speech. Our hope is that he follows his words with his deeds. President Clinton acknowledged in his address last night the need to pay special attention to our problems with illegal immigration.

However, President Clinton forgot to mention to the American people that he vetoed a bill which would have provided Californians \$1.6 billion in reimbursement funds over the next 5 years for the costs of providing health care to illegal immigrants. He also vetoed the 1996 Commerce-State-Justice Appropriations Act, thus denying Californians more than \$300 million as reimbursement for the cost of incarcerating alien felons.

Mr. President, your actions speak louder than words; and words alone will not solve our problem. This lack of attention has a human cost. Last year at San Diego's border with Mexico, a Border Patrol agent fell to his death while chasing illegal immigrants. Last week, a man trying to evade U.S. Border Patrol agents plunged to his death, and five other men were injured when they ran off a 120-foot cliff near Otay Lakes Dam.

Words are hollow if they are not backed up with actions. Our hope in the California delegation is that President Clinton joins us with the force of his actions, as we address these difficult immigration problems.

## EXTRADITION OF INDICTED WAR CRIMINALS

HON. CHRISTOPHER H. SMITH

OF NEW JERSEY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, January 24, 1996

Mr. SMITH of New Jersey. Mr. Speaker, I rise this afternoon to express my solid support for language contained in H.R. 1530, the National Defense Authorization Act, providing for the extradition of indicted war criminals from the United States to the International Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia and Rwanda in the Hague. This legislation provides the legal basis for the surrender of such persons and closes a technical loophole which could undermine efforts to prosecute those responsible for the commission of war crimes. Adoption of this provision should serve as an example to other countries to undertake similar action consistent with our obligations to cooperate fully with the important work of the Tribunal. To date more than 50 individuals from the former Yugoslavia have been indicted, including the Bosnian Serb leaders Radovan Karadzic and Ratko Mladic. Last November, I had an opportunity to meet with Chief Prosecutor Richard Goldstone to discuss his on-going investigations. He stressed that those responsible for war crimes must be held personally accountable, regardless of their relationship to peace negotiations.

As Chairman of the Helsinki Commission, I urge my colleagues to demonstrate their firm commitment to the pursuit of justice in the former Yugoslavia and Rwanda by passing this implementing legislation and ensuring that the Tribunal receives the resources it needs to accomplish the vital tasks it has been given. Mr. Speaker, I ask that the text of a letter to the President on this matter be included in the RECORD.

COMMISSION ON SECURITY AND CO-  
OPERATION IN EUROPE,

Washington, DC, February 8, 1995.

The PRESIDENT,  
The White House, Washington, DC.

DEAR MR. PRESIDENT: As members of the Commission on Security and Cooperation in Europe, we have been following with great

• This "bullet" symbol identifies statements or insertions which are not spoken by a Member of the Senate on the floor.

Matter set in this typeface indicates words inserted or appended, rather than spoken, by a Member of the House on the floor.